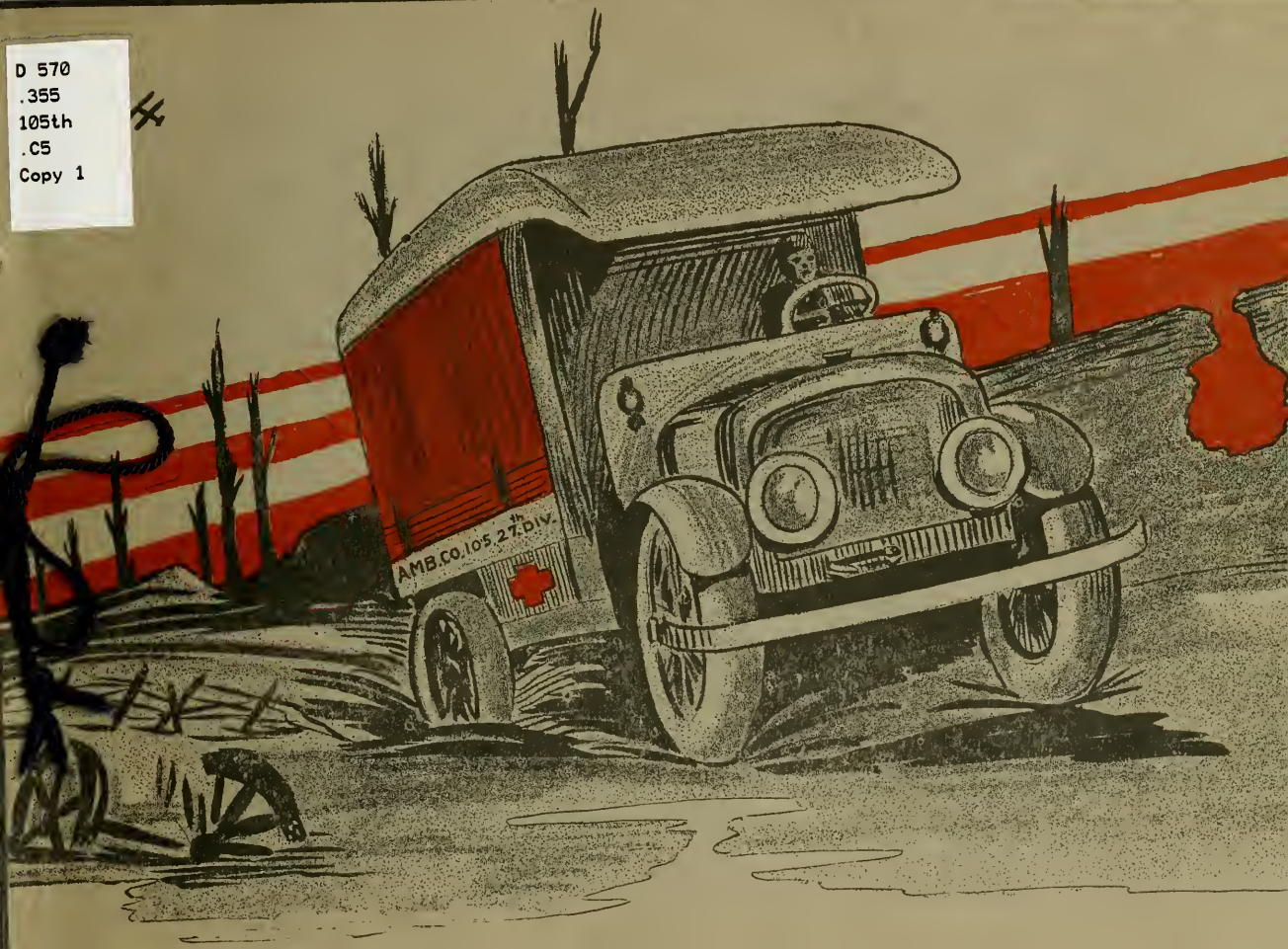


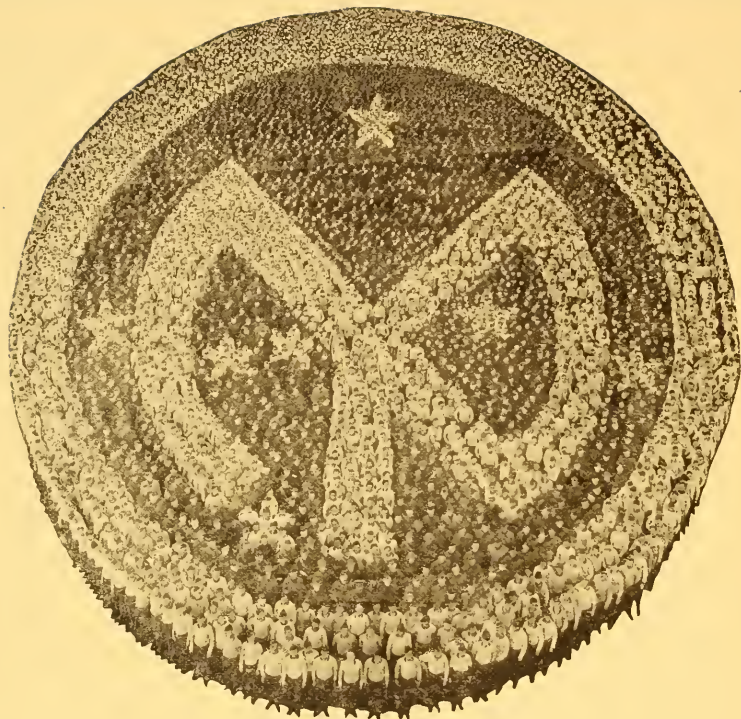
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HISTORY
OF
AMBULANCE COMPANY No. 105
(FORMER FOURTH N. Y. AMBULANCE CO.)
102nd SANITARY TRAIN

27th DIVISION, U. S. A.

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WALTER CHASKEL
557 Academy St., Astoria, L. I., N. Y.



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Living Insignia, 25th Division, U. S. A.
Maj. Gen. John F. O'Ryan, Commanding

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On November 10, 1915, the Fourth Ambulance Company, N. G. N. Y., was formally mustered into State Service at the Jefferson Street Armory, Syracuse, N. Y., by Lt.-Col. W. S. Terriberry, the Division Surgeon. Ten days previously, Capt. Jefferson B. Latta had received orders from the Adjutant General of the State of New York to organize this company, and in this comparatively short space of time a full complement of men had been obtained. During the ensuing months recruiting progressed rapidly, and on March 10, 1916, the maximum war strength of 79 men and 5 officers had been reached. The officers at that time were Capt. Jefferson B. Latta, and First Lieutenants William E. Truex, Ralph H. Dunning, Frederick S. Wetherell, and Seymore E. Schwartz.

A week after the call of the President on June 19, 1916, the company proceeded to Camp Whitman, N. Y., where it was mustered into Federal Service on July 9th. On July 15th the week's railroad journey to McAllen, Texas, was started, and the company, as a unit of the Sixth Division, began its term of service on the Border, which, though originally supposed could not possibly last more than ninety days, actually was prolonged month after month, through Election Day, the anniversary celebration on November 10th, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. Finally tents were struck on February 19, 1917, and a happy company, including the pet burro "Texas", was at last northward bound. Long though the term of duty had been, there was seldom a dull moment, and in reminiscing over the McAllen days, perhaps it is to be pardoned if the "Old Timers" make affectionate reference occasionally to that now well-worn phrase, "When we were on the Border." A picket line with sixty-five mules and twenty-two horses, hunting expeditions for ducks, quail, rabbits, rattlesnakes, etc., sand storms and hurricanes, ditch-digging, Divisional Reviews, ambulance convoys to Sterling's Ranch and the Artillery Range at La Gloria, the ten-day hike to Fort Ringgold, Rio Grande City, all these, and many more incidents bring back memories which the years cannot efface. Almost every man made a trip either to San Antonio, Corpus Christi, or Brownsville, and across the International Bridge to Matamoras, Mexico. Two of the more venturesome members, attired as German aviators, penetrated two hundred miles into the interior of Mexico to the City of Monterey.

An omission and a commission occurred toward the end of 1916, respectively, in the resignation of Lieutenant Whetherell from, and the assignment of Lt. Reginald M. Ballantyne to this organization. Shortly after the muster out of the company, which took place on March 1st, Lieutenant Dunning tendered his resignation, and later became the "Dashing Leader" of the depot unit.



Company Street, McAllen, Tex.



Fourth Ambulance Co., McAllen, Tex., 1916-17

The routine of weekly drills at the Armory was shortly enlivened by the appearance of a sprightly sergeant-instructor by name of White, whose "vun, two, tree, four" resounded through the arched dome of our Armory in tones like unto that of an excited fish peddler. Attention, men! More respect must be shown. Salute your new officer, Lieutenant White. Yes, indeed, in those mid-summer days of 1917 many queer things were sprung on us; but despite all handicaps, a full quota of men answered the call on July 16, 1917. Drafted into Federal Service on August 5th, the organization became known as Ambulance Company 105, 102nd Sanitary Train under the organization of the 27th Division, and on September 7th proceeded to Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, S. C. The Camp site was admirably located on a nice broad roadway, and all the tents, the mess hall and shower baths electrically lighted. Thanks to the close proximity of the Base Hospital, new wards of which were constantly under course of construction, the tents acquired wooden floors and sides as if by magic, and later in the year when the "Sunny South" took on the appearance of Labrador, stoves and coal became an additional gratuitous issue.

Lieutenant Ballantyne returned to his command September 22, 1917, having been absent on detached service at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., with Lieutenant Schwartz since July. The latter remained at the Fort until the follow-



Picket Line, McAllen, Tex.

ing month and resigned his commission in the National Guard to accept a commission in the Regular Army. First Lieutenant John W. McKemy, Medical Reserve Corps, was assigned to this command from Fort Benjamin Harrison in November and received his commission as Captain M. R. C. the following month. On April 1st, 1918, Captain Truex received notification of his promotion to that rank, and on the 10th Captain Ballantyne was likewise notified.

In October the Company received its equipment of thirteen motor ambulances and from then on performed ambulance service for the entire camp as well as for the target ranges located twenty miles distant in a most picturesque section of the Blue Ridge mountains. Valuable experience was gained by details of men who were assigned at various times to the infirmaries of the Ammunition Train at Gowansville and Campobello, as well as in the operating room, dressing room, and wards of the Base Hospital.



The Rio Grande, Mexico in the distance

Again the anniversary on November 10th was celebrated in fitting manner by a banquet and entertainment at the Cleveland Hotel, Spartanburg's Hotel DeLuxe. For Thanksgiving and Christmas, turkey dinners were served in the company's mess hall which was appropriately decorated for the occasions. After New Years the weeks dragged into months and it was not until May 19, 1918, that the company left Camp Wadsworth for Camp Stuart, Newport News, Va. Meanwhile a severe loss had been sustained, but contrary to the established theory, there was no corresponding gain. Namely, on March 21st our erstwhile officer, Lieutenant White, was assigned to the position of Adjutant of the Sanitary Train. That one sentence signifies and will always recall to the minds of some thousand odd men a period of mirth combined with misery. There may be a niche in heaven for Adjutants, but if so we prefer to be relegated to the other place.



Cotton-tails, quail and three other "birds"

Restrictions were as numerous as they were ridiculous, and of a nature designed to encourage a perfectly new and fascinating outdoor sport, known as "running the guard," and though the merciless pen of the lawmaker dealt severely with the less fortunate culprits who happened to fall within his clutches, the entire proceedings lent diversion and zest to what are now known as the Battles of Wadsworth and Stuart. Although passes were at a premium, many a party was hastily organized and enjoyed trips to Old Point Comfort, Fortress Munroe, Buckrow Beach, and Norfolk. All things good or bad finally come to an end, however, and when on June 30th all hands clamored aboard the U. S. S. Huron, the former "Kaiser Friedrich der Grosse," it was with light hearts and visions of the sterner duties to be performed "Over There."

The trip across was memorable in many respects, though only one real exciting incident occurred. A few days out from port a submarine was sighted and a short but decisive naval battle ensued, which terminated with the customary disastrous results to the U-boat.

The Fourth of July on the high seas was celebrated by impressive ceremonies, speeches by the ship's Captain, the Army Colonel and the Chaplain, a band concert and boxing tournament.



On the hike to Ft. Ringgold, Rio Grande City, Tex.

At 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the twelfth, the welcome cry of "Land" resounded, and shortly afterwards the rockbound coast of Brittany became plainly discernible. The fleet of thirteen transports at once formed a single file with the good ship Huron second in line, and convoyed by numerous torpedo boat destroyers, picked its way majestically into the Harbor of Brest, with flags flying, bands playing, men singing and cheering, and (what had been a tabooed act on the entire trip) electric lights shining brightly. The following day the unloading of men and cargo began and it was a decidedly happy and carefree throng that trudged through the quaint streets to the outskirts of the city where pup tents were pitched in a field. We were now in what is termed a "rest camp." To the uninitiated it may not be amiss to state that the man who invented rest camps must have been a combination of deep sea diver and contortionist. It rained almost incessantly that first week, and when finally the sun broke through the mist someone evolved the brilliant idea to transfer us to the nearby historical Pontanezen Barracks where it was easy enough to keep dry even though it did not rain. In lieu of some better reason let us say that "for the good of the service" this company was retained at Brest, on duties hereinafter set forth, while every other unit of the Sanitary Train was ordered to different points at or near the front. Let it be said to the credit of the 105th that although they performed their specified tasks cheerfully, there was not a man who would not gladly have changed places with those others who were right up in the line of advance.



The "Sunny South," Camp Wadsworth, S. C.

Pontanezen Barracks were visited and inspected on August 2nd by General Pershing and on August 16th by President Poincare, both of whom delivered stirring speeches. Even at that early date the General came out openly with the prediction that hostilities would cease before the end of the year, and later events proved that his prophesy was well founded.

On August 28th the company moved to tents in a park called Bois de Boulogne, the location being within easier access to the Motor Reception Park and the water front. There were details of men assigned to assemble all sorts of motor vehicles, and they did it well. Several trips were made with fleets of new motor conveyances driven by our men to such points as La Havre, St. Nazaire, and Dijon, which consumed from three to fifteen days. There were other details that unloaded hospital trains of wounded Americans and transferred them to transports to be returned to the



A corner of the mess shack, Camp Wadsworth, S. C.

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States. And they did **that** well. Still others unloaded the sick men from incoming ships, and though we shall only touch briefly on this phase of our endeavors in this narrative, it will always form a memorable chapter in our lives. It was here that we first began to realize and appreciate the months of training and physical conditioning received at Camp Wadsworth, for, exposed to all manner of contagion, not a man in the company contracted the dreaded "Flu" or pneumonia. In utmost modesty it may likewise be chronicled that **this** duty was performed creditably, and met with the unqualified commendation of the Base Surgeon.

Finally on October 14th the order to move toward the front was received and immediately there was great rejoicing in the ranks. Our dream was at last to be fulfilled. That which we had enlisted for would soon be realized. One feature marred what would have otherwise been a joyous occasion. Captain Latta, who had come to be looked upon as a fixture of this company, had been ordered to remain in Brest to organize a Provisional Ambulance Company, and thirteen of our men volunteered to form the nucleus, in exchange for which a like number was added to our ranks.

Captain Truex took over the reins of office and together with Captain Ballantyne the railroad journey began with the ultimate destination in doubt by all. The first stop of importance was at Rouen, where ample time was given the men for sight-seeing, and there were many points of interest to be looked up. The famous Cathedrals, Museums, and the spot where "Jeanne d'Arc" perished, were but a few of the places sought out. That night the company in a body attended an excellent variety show and surprised the audience as well as performers by outbursts of genuine Yankee enthusiasm. We were now in a section of France in which British troops predominated and in many respects the change was a welcome one, especially as we could once more make ourselves understood without the aid of violent gesticulations to which we had been forced to resort in "parley-voing" to the natives of Brest.

The compartment coaches in which we had travelled thus far were substituted for dinky box cars, labelled "40 Hommes—8 Cheveaux", and after another day and night en route we entered the zone through which Death had but recently stalked. Amiens was the first city through which we passed that showed marks of bombardments. The next town, Villers Bretenoux, was the farthest point the Germans had reached, and from here on every



Motor Ambulances, Camp Wadsworth, S. C.



Entrance to Harbor, Brest, France



Ambulance Co. 105. Before Leaving Armory, Syracuse, N. Y., August, 1917



Pontanezen Barracks, Brest, France

outside a gigantic red cross was outlined on the ground—another evidence of Hun devilry—to give the allied airmen the impression of the presence of a Field Hospital. Heavy firing could be heard distinctly, and at night red flashes in the heavens denoted the proximity of the battle line. It was here that we were rejoined by Captain McKemy and other units of the Sanitary Train who had been privileged to participate in actions on various fronts, and their lurid descriptions made us feel as though we had had things pretty soft thus far. The 27th Division, which had broken the Hindenburg line a fortnight before, was then coming out of the lines for a well earned rest in a back area, and we, who had done nothing of an active nature had to follow along, though it was not at all to our liking. An incident occurred right here that is worthy of mention. Less than an hour after our train pulled out of Roisel, the tracks and platform where we had been standing was blown up by a delayed German mine. Several soldiers were killed and much property damaged.

The next stop was Corbie (October 25) a small town at the junction of the Ancre and Somme rivers that had been the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the war. It was here that the French and British held the Germans in check and finally began their great forward drive from this point. The surrounding battlefields had not been cleared of debris and therefore afforded a

village was literally wiped off the map. The more level stretches of country were covered with line upon line of communicating trenches in various states of demolition, while every hillside was honeycombed with dugouts, some to accommodate one or two men and others capable of affording shelter to a thousand or more. Barbed wire entanglements seemed to cover every foot of the ground, and shell holes varying in diameter from six to sixty feet had disembowled the earth. Trees, leafless and bare seemed to raise their limbs heavenward as if in mute supplication. Taken all in all, the ruin and desolation baffles description.

At Roisel we quit the train and were ordered to a camp on a hillside overlooking the Valley of the Somme. Our kitchen was established in a shed that had served as stable shelter for German artillery horses not more than two weeks previously, and directly



"40 Hcmes—8 Cheveaux"

veritable harvest for souvenir hunters. If there is a man in this company who does not possess a "Jerry" helmet, bayonet, "Got Mit Uns" belt, etc., it is because he was too lazy to go out and pick them up. We were billeted in a row of little houses long since abandoned by the owners, and each squad began light housekeeping on a more or less elaborate scale. An exceptional dinner marked the anniversary of our third birthday.

On the morning of November 10th a very impressive ceremony took place in honor of our departed comrades. The Division was lined up on a piece of rising ground and at the stroke of 10 o'clock every man stood at attention while a massed band played "Nearer My God to Thee." It was a vastly different appearing body of men that passed in review before the General that day than on former occasions at Camp Wadsworth. The ranks were sadly depleted in numbers, but there was a look of determination in the eyes of the men which bespoke of readiness to re-enter the lines and avenge the loss of their fallen pals. This was in reality to be a final inspection before moving up toward the battle front again. However, the very next day, November 11th, needless to say what occurred. We were astounded by the incessant tolling of the Cathedral bells proclaiming the signing of the Armistice. The tri-color of France, in many cases pathetically faded and worn, was triumphantly flown from the modest homes of recently returned refugees. At first, neither the natives nor the Yanks could grasp the full significance of the glorious event, but as the day progressed rejoicing became more general, and at night-fall took on quite a 4th of July aspect.

From that date until the 26th, when we left Corbie for a back area, there was doubt whether our Division would be comprised in the Army of Occupation or be returned to the States, but when it became known that we were destined for the latter move, joy was unbounded and speculation rife as to the likelihood of seeing home by Christmas.

St. Corneille, on the outskirts of which village we took up our abode in the shadow of an unoccupied Chateau, may be found on the map (by very close scrutiny) twenty kilos from Le Mans. Occasional visits to that city helped to break the monotony of our doleful existence. Squads distributed themselves in stables, cowsheds, chicken coops and haylofts, and wiled away the time in eating, sleeping and writing falsehoods to the folks back home. The waggoners kept busy transporting the sick of the Division from neighboring villages to the Chateau, which had been converted into a hospital. A very acceptable Xmas present was the acquisition of another officer to the company, Lieut. Kenneth B. Wallace. On New Year's day, by invitation of the Sanitary Train, one hundred French children gathered together outside the village church and each was presented with a little package of gifts as a memento of the American Soldiers' sojourn in their midst. A band concert helped to enliven the festivities.

On January 22nd the 27th Division marched to an appointed rendezvous and was reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief, General Pershing, after which about fifty officers and men were personally decorated with medals.

After many false starts, we finally received orders to pack up, and on February 25th marched to Champagne (6 kilos), where we boarded American box cars and reached Brest the next day. An eight kilo hike to Camp Pontanezen in a drenching rain and with full packs dampened everything except our spirits, and we cheerfully put up with the inconveniences of sleeping and eating facilities for the next five days, as we realized we were beginning the last lap of the campaign. Four more of our men were transferred to the Motor Ambulance Pool and remained with Major Latta. Lieutenant Wallace had received his Captaincy the day we left St. Corneille, but his end our joy over his

promotion was overshadowed by an order transferring him to a Casual Company at Brest. The rest of us shouldered packs and stumbled over stony roads down to the water front where after slight delay we crowded on lighters and soon were aboard the U. S. S. Mount Vernon. It was a coincidence that we should be returning home aboard the same vessel from which we unloaded the wounded after she had been torpedoed on September 5th. This was her first trip after coming out of dry dock. At 10 o'clock that night she weighed anchor, and most of us having retired early did not even realize that we were under way until the next morning, when all that could be seen were the rolling billows of the broad Atlantic.

Our ship, the former German liner Kronprinzessin Cecilie, was a palace compared to the Huron, and in every respect but one the trip was far more enjoyable. That one exception was seasickness, with which fully one-half of the 6000 troops were afflicted the first few days. Soon, however, appetites returned and the most sought after detail below decks was in the galley dispensing food and incidentally devouring it. The meals were excellent, sleeping and washing accommodations far superior to those on the "Huron", and another advantage was the unrestricted use of all deck space.

At 4 a. m., March 11th a distant light became dimly visible and it did not require a mariner to conclude that we were in sight of the good old U. S. A. It was then that all the months of pent-up emotion broke loose and the men went wild with delight. Cheer upon cheer rang out, but strange though it may seem, the sounds choked in our throats when the Statue of Liberty loomed through the mist. By 7:30 a. m. the Mount Vernon was moored alongside Pier 4, Hoboken, a band was playing, the ever-present Red Cross was right on the job, and when the adjacent dock was reached the Mayor's Committee boat bearing relatives and friends of the returned soldiers was there to greet us. Loaded on to ferries the next stop was Weehawken, then by train to Camp Merritt, N. J., which we found to be an ideal place. The "Powers that be" decreed that passes were to be granted liberally and 24 hour leaves for New Yorkers and 72 hour leaves for up-State men gave the long sought after opportunity for an early reunion with the home folks.

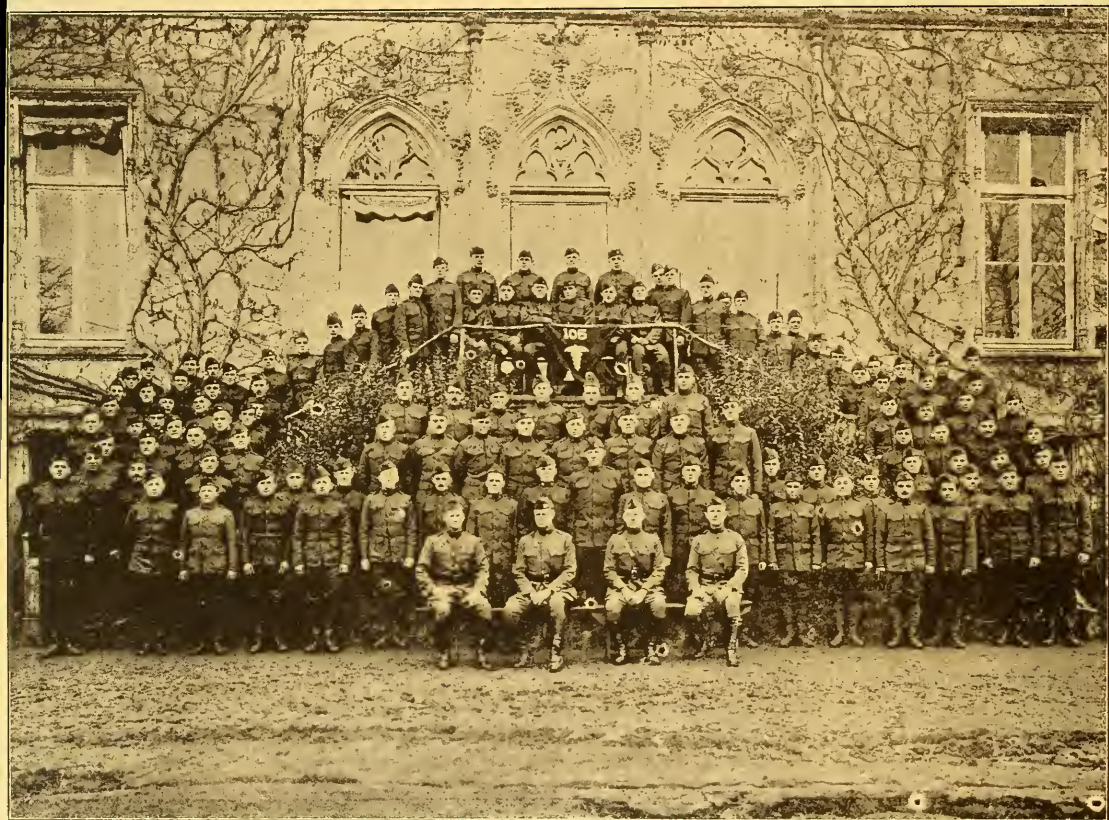
Early on the morning of the 24th we took our departure from



"Jerry" Prisoners Acting as Litter-bearers



Street Scene and Demolished Cathedral, Corbie, France



Ambulance Co. 105, Chateau, St. Corneille, France, February, 1919

Camp Merritt and hiked over the Palisades to the Hudson and by ferry and subway finally reached the Armory of the 22nd Engineers. The following day the crowning event of our army life occurred. Whether the parade was more inspiring to those who marched or to the millions that witnessed it, is a question. New York, long famed for doing things in superlatives, far outdid itself in doing honor to its returned "OWN". The triumphal march of five miles up the flag-bedecked avenue, through magnificent arches, and between a struggling, howling mass of humanity, banked on both sides of the line of march, compensated for all we had passed through during our army career, and made every man feel proud of belonging to a unit of the 27th Division, U. S. A.

Can we ever forget those last lingering days at Camp Upton! Despite the unseasonable weather, the rather poor mess, the tiresome lectures, etc., the men seemed to have become suddenly imbued with an effervescence of spirits which at times completely bubbled over. There was no telling from one minute to the next what new escapade would be "pulled." Douglas Fairbanks' stuff predominated. Still, why not the rejoicing? Were we not on the eve of the event for which all hearts had pined for weeks and weeks? To transpose Mr. Shakspeare's apt remarks, "Not that we loved the O. D.'s less, but the 'civvies' more."



U. S. S. Mount Vernon "Homeward Bound"



Street Scene, St. Corneille, France

On the morning of April 4th the mustering out process was finally concluded and every member of the Company who claimed Syracuse or vicinity as his home, boarded Pullmans that night and arrived next morning to find the Salt City as anxious to receive him as he was to return to the familiar scenes.

The parade to the Armory, the civic and other entertainments thus brought to a close our army career and gave added significance to the words emblazoned on the City Hall: "Syracuse Bids You Welcome."

HOW DID YOU COME OUT?

Army life does wonders to make or break a man,
Such cases were traditional since this old world began.
No matter what he looked like or from whence he came,
At the time of final muster out he never looks the same.

A ninety pounder may gain weight,
A heavy man grows thin;
Private Buck might graduate
To shiny bars of tin.
A meek insipid looking youth
Acquires every vice,
While others who were most uncouth
Become so very nice.
The tidy ones grow sloppy,
The careless oft' improve;
Some captains try to copy
A mule that will not move.
Teetot'lers might acquire
A thirst for old "vin rouge",

While those who licked up fire
Thought best to drop the booze.
The hustlers became goldbricks,
The goldbricks gained a step;
Old dogs learned many new tricks,
And now are full of pep.
Some men blow in their hard-earned chink
All night in shooting craps,
Then marvel at the other gink
Who's in his bunk at taps.
If further proof is needed
To emphasize these facts
Please contemplate and heed it,
The history and acts—
Of one decrepit Kaiser,
Who thought he'd beat the world,
And now is sad but wiser,
From this round earth been hurled.

THE REGENERATION OF A CAPTAIN

On the first of January
He resolved he would be very
Kind and good thenceforth to every
Man in this ungodly strife.

He would not be mean and crabby,
But as a good hearted chap he
Would do more to make us happy
And to bless our army life.

He had always loved us greatly,
But had shown it too sedately,
And he had been thinking lately
Of the many little ways

In which he might show affection,
Cutting out mess kit inspection,
Yet he knew that some correction
Would entitle him to praise.

So next morning the old silly
Mentioned it was growing chilly,
Even went so far with Philly
As to fit him up first class.

"I'll obtain for you an issue
Of some soap, candles and tissue,
And besides all this I wish you
Would accept from me a pass.

Would you care to visit Paree?
Promenade with Jeanne and Marie,
Hear the Mademoiselles cry oui oui;
It's much livelier than Brest.

If you're indiscreet, I'm sorry—
I'll pay bills, you needn't worry—
Take your time you mustn't hurry—
You deserve a well-earned rest."

Said next week he might be able
To transfer us from the stable;
He remarked about the table
And the excellence of fare.

Said the mess was most delicious
And the bacon so nutritious—
"Who," he said, "is there to wish us
Greater blessings than we share?"

We were breathless and we wondered
If somehow he had not blundered
Could it be some strain had sundered
Him from reason? When he left

We sat down quite faint and worried
For he had not speechless, hurried
Through his breakfast and then scurried
For his horse. Was he bereft

Of his senses? We were getting
Very nervous from our fretting,
And our thoughts were all for letting
Colonel Pilsenpowders know.

For, perhaps, he needed dosing,
Scientific diagnosing,
Or a rest from tasks engrossing—
We would tell the Colonel so!

All the while these worries clustered,
We admit it had us flustered,
But at length some way we mustered
Up the courage to ask "Why?"

And the Captain's voice so cheery
Made us actually feel leery
When he called the "topper" dearie—
It's impossible. Good-bye!

It has given me much pleasure to read this accurate history of Ambulance Co. #105, covering briefly its activities from its formation to the present time. Such a record reflects the greatest credit on the organization and stands as a fitting testimonial to all men who have been members of this command. Had this last great war continued a few days longer this company would have seen more service nearer the front. However, wound chevrons and battle are not everything in war, and no more valuable work was done anywhere overseas than that performed by this company at Brest.

The personal loyalty of each man to his officers and to me, as well as the discipline and efficiency of the unit as a whole, is thoroughly appreciated, and I am only too glad to add this note of commendation to its permanent records.

W. L. P. Madhams

Lt. Col. M. C. Com. 102 Sanitary Train



In Memoriam
JOHN B. ELLIS
Died
Le Mans, France
January 16, 1919

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